

Default crisis dodged — for now — with Dem-GOP debt accord

By K. FREKING, A. FRAM
and A. JAFFE

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Senate leaders announced Thursday to extend the government's borrowing authority into December, temporarily averting an unprecedented federal default that experts say would devastate the economy.

"Our hope is to get this done as soon as today," Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer declared. Republican leader Mitch McConnell, whose party has been blocking the debt limit extension, said, "The Senate is moving forward."



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Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell of Ky., walks to a policy luncheon on Capitol Hill, Thursday, Oct. 7, 2021, in Washington. Associated Press

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Default crisis dodged — for now — with Dem-GOP debt accord

Continued from Front

The first crucial vote on the measure was set for Thursday night.

Republican leaders were working to find the 10 votes they need from their party to advance the extension. John Thune of South Dakota, the second-ranking Senate Republican, said, "In the end we'll be there, but it will be a painful birthing process."

In their agreement, the Republican and Democratic leaders edged back from a perilous standoff over lifting the nation's borrowing cap, with Democratic senators accepting an offer from McConnell.

McConnell made the GOP offer a day earlier, just before his Republicans were prepared to block longer-term legislation to suspend the debt limit and as President Joe Biden and business leaders ramped up their concerns that a default would disrupt government payments to millions of people and throw the nation into recession.

The White House signaled the president's support, with principal deputy press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre issuing a statement that the president would sign a bill to raise the debt limit when it passed Congress.

Earlier, she called the short-term deal a "positive step," even as she assailed Republicans for blocking Democratic efforts.

"It gives us some breathing room from the catastrophic default we were approaching because of Sen. McConnell's decision to play politics with our economy," she told reporters.

Wall Street rallied modestly on the news.

The agreement sets the stage for a sequel of sorts in December, when Congress will again face pressing deadlines to fund the government and raise the debt



President Joe Biden responds to a question about the short term deal on debt as he arrives Air Force One at O'Hare International Airport in Chicago, Thursday, Oct. 7, 2021.

Associated Press

limit before heading home for the holidays.

The agreement will allow for raising the debt ceiling by about \$480 billion, according to a Senate aide familiar with the negotiations who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss them.

That is the level that the Treasury Department has said is needed to get to Dec. 3.

"Basically, I'm glad that Mitch McConnell finally saw the light," Bernie Sanders, the independent senator from Vermont, said late Wednesday.

McConnell portrayed it differently.

"The pathway our Democratic colleagues have accepted will spare the American people any near-term crisis, while definitively resolving the majority's excuse that they lacked time to address the debt limit

through (reconciliation)," McConnell said Thursday. "Now there will be no question: They'll have plenty of time."

Congress has just days to act before the Oct. 18 deadline when the Treasury Department has warned it would quickly run short of funds to handle the nation's already accrued debt load.

McConnell and Senate Republicans have insisted that Democrats go it alone to raise the debt ceiling. Further, McConnell has insisted that Democrats use the same cumbersome legislative process called reconciliation that they used to pass a \$1.9 trillion COVID-19 relief bill and have been employing to try to pass Biden's \$3.5 trillion measure to boost safety net, health and environmental programs.

McConnell said in his offer Wednesday that Republicans would still insist that Democrats use the reconciliation process for a long-term debt limit extension. However, he said Republicans are willing to "assist in

expediting" that process, and in the meantime Democrats may use the normal legislative process to pass a short-term debt limit extension with a fixed dollar amount to cover current spending levels into December.

Sen. Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska, said she'd be among those voting to advance the bill.

"I'm not willing to let this train go off the cliff," she said.

On Wednesday, Biden enlisted top business leaders to push for immediately suspending the debt limit, saying the approaching deadline created the risk of a historic default that would be like a "meteor" that could crush the economy and financial markets.

At a White House event, the president shamed Republican senators for threatening to filibuster any suspension of the \$28.4 trillion cap on the government's borrowing authority. He leaned into the credibility of corporate America — a group that has traditionally been aligned with the GOP

on tax and regulatory issues — to drive home his point as the heads of Citi, JP Morgan Chase and Nasdaq gathered in person and virtually to say the debt limit must be lifted.

"It's not right and it's dangerous," Biden said of the resistance by Senate Republicans.

His moves came amid talk that Democrats might try to change Senate filibuster rules to get around Republicans. But Sen. Joe Manchin, D-W.Va., reiterated his opposition to such a change Wednesday, likely taking it off the table for Democrats.

The business leaders echoed Biden's points about needing to end the stalemate as soon as possible, though they side-stepped the partisan tensions in doing so. Each portrayed the debt limit as an avoidable crisis.

"We just can't wait to the last minute to resolve this," said Jane Fraser, CEO of the bank Citi. "We are, simply put, playing with fire right now, and our country has suffered so greatly over the last few years."

The human and the economic cost of the pandemic has been wrenching, and we don't need a catastrophe of our own making."

Ahead of the White House meeting, the administration warned that if the borrowing limit isn't extended, it could set off an international financial crisis.

"A default would send shock waves through global financial markets and would likely cause credit markets worldwide to freeze up and stock markets to plunge," the White House Council of Economic Advisers said in a new report. "Employers around the world would likely have to begin laying off workers."

Once a routine matter, raising the debt limit has become politically treacherous over the past decade or more, used by Republicans, in particular, to rail against government spending and the rising debt load. □

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Trump to invoke executive privilege in Jan. 6 House probe

By **ERIC TUCKER** and
MARY CLARE JALONICK
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Donald Trump intends to assert executive privilege in a congressional investigation into the Jan. 6 insurrection at the Capitol, a move that could prevent the testimony of onetime aides, according to a letter sent by lawyers for the former president.

The letter went to at least some witnesses who were subpoenaed by the House committee and it makes clear that Trump plans to invoke privileges meant to protect presidential communications from being shared with Congress. The substance of the letter was described Thursday by a person who has seen it and who spoke on condition of anonymity to The Associated Press because the letter was not yet public.

Spokespeople for Trump did not immediately return messages seeking comment. Trump said in a statement last month that he would “fight the Subpoenas on Executive Privilege and other grounds, for the good of our Country.”

The move sets the stage for a likely clash with House Democrats who are investigating the roles of Trump and his allies in the run-up to the riot, when thousands of Trump supporters broke into the Capitol as Con-



Former President Donald Trump speaks during his Save America rally in Perry, Ga., on Saturday, Sept. 25, 2021.

gress was certifying the results of the presidential election won by Democrat Joe Biden. The committee is rapidly issuing subpoenas to individuals who are either connected to Trump or helped plan the massive rally on the morning of Jan. 6 at which he told his supporters to “fight like hell.” The committee, which was formed over the summer, last month issued subpoenas to Mark Meadows, Trump’s former chief of staff; Dan Scavino, the former deputy chief of staff for communications; Kashyap Patel, a former Defense Department official; and Steve Bannon, a former Trump adviser. It was not immediately clear how those

witnesses would respond to Trump’s decision to invoke executive privilege or what consequences they might face if they refuse to cooperate. Patel said in a statement that he will “continue to tell the American people the truth about January 6.” It did not say whether he would comply. Committee members have said they plan to try and move swiftly to obtain testimony and documents should any witnesses refuse to cooperate. Rep. Adam Schiff, D-Calif., tweeted that if the Trump associates do not comply, “they can be subject to criminal contempt.” Charging the Trump associates with contempt could

still be a lengthy process, including votes of the full House and potential court proceedings.

Because Trump no longer is in office, he cannot directly assert privilege to keep witnesses quiet or documents out of the hands of Congress. As the current president, Biden will have some say in the matter.

The committee has issued more than a dozen subpoenas to people linked to plans for the Jan. 6 protests, including three additional witnesses announced Thursday. Those individuals would be less likely to get help from Trump’s executive privilege claims, which would be limited to people who worked in the

White House. The committee chairman, Rep. Bennie Thompson, D-Miss., said subpoenas had gone to Ali Abdul Akbar, also known as Ali Alexander, and Nathan Martin, as well the organization “Stop the Steal,” to learn more about a rally that was planned on the Capitol grounds at the same time as the larger gathering on the National Mall.

The committee earlier subpoenaed 11 other individuals connected to the planning of that larger rally.

According to the committee, Alexander released a statement after the riot linking “Stop the Steal” to the Capitol rally permit and explaining that the intention was to direct attendees of the larger rally to march to the Capitol. The panel cited reports that Alexander had made reference “to the possible use of violence to achieve the organization’s goals” and had been in communication with the White House and members of Congress.

“The rally on the Capitol grounds on January 6th, like the rally near the White House that day, immediately preceded the violent attack on the seat of our democracy,” Thompson said in a statement. “Over the course of that day, demonstrations escalated to violence and protestors became rioters.” □

Associated Press

Facebook exec: We do not prioritize engagement over safety

By **BARBARA ORTUTAY**
AP Technology Writer

A Facebook executive is pushing back on a whistleblower’s claims — supported by the company’s own internal research — that the social network’s products harm children and fuel polarization in the U.S. Monika Bickert, Facebook’s head of global policy management, told The Associated Press Wednesday that “we do not and we have not prioritized engagement over safety.” Bickert said

the reason Facebook researches teen well-being on Instagram is so that the company can build better products and features to support them. Whistleblower Frances Haugen, however, testified before the Senate Tuesday that Facebook knows that vulnerable people are harmed by its systems and has not made meaningful changes to prevent it. The platform is designed to exploit negative emotions to keep people on the platform, she said.

“They are aware of the side effects of the choices they have made around amplification,” Haugen said. “They know that algorithmic-based rankings, or engagement-based rankings, keeps you on their sites longer. You have longer sessions, you show up more often, and that makes them more money.” Bickert pointed to features and tools Facebook has introduced over the years, such as hiding “like counts” on Instagram “which means when you



In this image taken from video Monika Bickert, Facebook’s head of global policy management, speaks during an interview with The Associated Press Wednesday, Oct. 6, 2021, in response to a whistleblower’s claims — supported by the company’s own internal research — that the social network’s products harm children and fuel polarization.

Associated Press

post something, if you’re a young person, you don’t have to worry about how

many people are going to like your post and whether people will see that.” □

Alabama swamped, 4 killed in floods from slow-moving front

By JAY REEVES

Associated Press

PELHAM, Ala. (AP) — Terrified drivers climbed out of swamped cars and muddy floodwater flowed through neighborhoods after a stalled weather front drenched Alabama for hours, leaving entire communities under water Thursday and killing at least four people.

Dozens of people had to be rescued Wednesday night in central Alabama, where the National Weather Service said as much as 13 inches (33 centimeters) of rain fell, and a south Alabama town temporarily lost its main grocery store when a creek came through the doors of the Piggly Wiggly. Near the coast, heavy rains caused sewage to bubble out of underground pipes. Metro Birmingham remained under a flash flood watch much of the day until storms moved into Georgia.

Another 3 inches (7.6 centimeters) of rain could fall there and in western South Carolina by nightfall, the weather service said, and the Florida Panhandle could get doused.

A 4-year-old girl and an 18-year-old woman died in separate incidents when floods carried away vehicles in northeast Alabama, said Marshall County Coroner Cody Nugent. Searchers found the bodies of a



Michael Halbert wades through his flooded neighborhood in Pelham, Ala., on Thursday, Oct. 7, 2021.

boyfriend and girlfriend, both 23, inside a car that was swept away by a swollen stream in the Birmingham suburb of Hoover, said Shelby County Coroner Lina Evans.

"Normally it's just a trickle. It was raging," she said. Evans identified the victims as Hoover residents Latin Marie Hill and Myles Jared Butler.

The deluge produced wild scenes on social media: floodwaters flowing between Christmas trees inside a Lowe's store in Hoover, refrigerator bins full of brown water in a home and dozens of cars

with their headlights submerged. Rescue crews helped motorists escape as low visibility and standing water made travel life-threatening in some areas. Some of the worst flooding happened in Pelham, outside Birmingham, where 82 people were rescued from homes and more than 15 were pulled from vehicles after creeks and streams overflowed, the Pelham Fire Department said early Thursday. More than 100 rescuers with 16 boats were involved, the statement said.

"Water was coming in the car so fast I had to bail out

the window," said Jill Caskey, who watched Thursday morning as a tow truck hauled away her sport utility vehicle from a low-lying parking lot in Pelham. The car stalled as she tried to navigate floodwaters during the deluge.

A police officer helped her to high ground, and Caskey's husband picked her up on a roadside. But it took them three hours to travel a few miles home because of flooded roads.

Caskey has heard the weather safety mantra of "turn around, don't drown," but said "it really happened so fast I didn't

have time to think about it."

The Alabama deluge came about seven weeks after flooding killed more than a dozen people in Tennessee. Such floods may be more common in the future because of global warming, scientists say.

Federal research has found that man-made climate change doubles the chances of the types of heavy rains that swamped Baton Rouge, Louisiana, with 26 inches (66 centimeters) of rain in 2016, killing a dozen people and damaging 150,000 homes.

In south Alabama near the Florida line, water covered streets in the flood-prone Escambia County towns of Brewton and East Brewton, inundating a shopping center and sending as much as 3 feet (1 meter) of water into the Piggly Wiggly. Two schools had to cancel classes, said Escambia Sheriff Heath Jackson.

To the south, in Baldwin County, as much as 250,000 gallons (946,000 liters) of waste water overflowed from sewage systems along Mobile Bay, officials said.

In Georgia, the National Weather Service said as many as 6 inches (15 centimeters) of rain fell in a crescent-shaped area from Columbus to Macon and then northeast toward Athens, Gainesville and South Carolina. □

Associated Press



A Federal Bureau of Investigation agent boards an Amtrak train after a shooting aboard the train in downtown Tucson, Ariz., on Monday, Oct. 4, 2021.

Associated Press

TUCSON, Ariz. (AP) — Officials on Thursday identified the armed passenger who died in a gunfight after fatally shooting a federal agent inside an Amtrak train in Arizona as Darrion

Taylor. The Pima County Medical Examiner's Office in Tucson said in a news release that Taylor, 26, was shot in the torso and limbs. The wounds were not self-inflicted, according to medi-

Gunman who killed agent on Amtrak train in Arizona ID'd

cal examiner Dr. Gregory Hess. A more detailed autopsy will be completed sometime next month.

A regional task force of Drug Enforcement Administration agents and local police officers were inspecting baggage for contraband at the train station in downtown Tucson on Monday morning. The train they were screening was the Sunset Limited, Train 2. It was making a scheduled stop in Tucson after leaving Los Angeles for New Orleans, according to Amtrak officials. Acting on tips

from Amtrak, authorities say they got permission to search baggage belonging to Taylor and another passenger in the same row, Devonte Okeith Mathis. When an officer found two bulk packages of marijuana during an inspection on the platform, Michael Garbo, a DEA group supervisor, and another agent reentered a train car to talk to Taylor. Authorities say that's when Taylor opened fire, killing Garbo and wounding a second agent. Another Tucson police officer was also caught in the gun-

fire and wounded.

The agent and officer both remain hospitalized. Their names have not been released. Tucson police say several responding officers exchanged gunfire with Taylor, who barricaded himself in a bathroom. He was later found dead inside. Mathis, meanwhile, was arrested on suspicion of knowingly and intentionally possessing with the intent to distribute less than 50 kilograms (110 pounds) of a mixture or substance containing a detectable amount of marijuana. □

U.S.-China challenge: Easing tensions despite differences

By **KEN MORITSUGU**

Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — In a relationship as fraught as America's and China's, just an agreement that talks were productive was a sign of progress.

Nine months into Joe Biden's presidency, the two sides finally appear to be trying to ease tensions that date from the Trump administration though U.S. complaints about Chinese policies on trade, Taiwan and other issues are little diminished.

A closed-door meeting in Zurich on Wednesday between senior Chinese foreign policy adviser Yang Jiechi and White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan was not accompanied by the public acrimony on display at earlier meetings.

After the six-hour talks, the U.S. disclosed an agreement in principle for a virtual summit between Biden and Chinese leader Xi Jinping by the end of the year. The two have talked by phone twice since Biden became president in January but not held a formal meeting.

Major differences divide what are by many mea-



In this Feb. 14, 2019, file photo, Chinese staffers adjust the U.S. and Chinese flags before the opening session of trade negotiations between U.S. and Chinese trade representatives at the Diaoyutai State Guesthouse in Beijing.

sures the world's two most powerful nations as they jostle for what each sees as its rightful place in the world order. Some differences over regional security and trade and technology may be irreconcilable, but successful talks could manage them and prevent any spill-over that impedes cooperation in other areas such as climate change.

"I don't think this marks the

turnaround and somehow we'll have a golden era, but maybe we've found the floor, or a floor, in which the relationships won't sink any deeper," said Drew Thompson, a former U.S. defense official who managed military-to-military relations with China, Taiwan and Mongolia.

Thompson, a visiting fellow at the National University of Singapore, said the meet-

ing in Zurich went "spectacularly well" compared with a March meeting in Alaska that Yang and Sullivan attended and other U.S.-China meetings in the last three years.

Zhao Kejin, a professor of international relations at Tsinghua University in Beijing, described the current direction as an attempt to ease tensions and said a Xi-Biden meeting could cap

those efforts.

"Compared to the tense relations during the Trump administration, the current relationship is moving toward mitigation," he said. "As far as how far it will move, we will wait and see."

One thorn in the relationship was removed two weeks ago when U.S. prosecutors reached a deal with a Chinese telecom executive that brought an end to prolonged extradition proceedings in Canada and allowed her to return to China.

Shortly after, two Canadians held by China for more than two years were released, and two Americans who had been blocked from leaving China were allowed to return to the United States.

And earlier this week, Chinese state media highlighted remarks by Biden's top trade official, Katherine Tai, that she plans frank conversations with her Chinese counterparts on resolving a tariff war. The U.S. administration, though, has not said whether it will accede to Chinese demands to roll back the tariffs, which were levied under former President Donald Trump. □

Associated Press

NATO chief hits out at Russia's 'malign activities'

BRUSSELS (AP) — NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said Thursday that the organization withdrew the accreditation of eight Russian officials to the military alliance in response to a rise in "malign activities" by Moscow.

The eight officials are to be deprived of access to NATO's Brussels headquarters from the end of the month because it believes they have been secretly working as intelligence officers. NATO also reduced the number of positions that Russia can accredit people for from 20 down to 10.

"This decision is not linked to any particular event, but we have seen over some time now an increase in

Russian malign activity, and therefore we need to be vigilant," Stoltenberg told reporters.

"The relationship between NATO and Russia is at its lowest point since the end of the Cold War. That's because of the Russian behavior.

We have seen their aggressive actions, not least against Ukraine, but also the significant military build-up and violations of important arms control agreements," he said.

Stoltenberg said that the decision to withdraw the accreditation of the eight "was done based on intelligence, was done because these are undeclared Russian intelligence officers." He said NATO must act

when Russian delegation members "conduct activities which not in line with their accreditation."

NATO suspended practical cooperation with Russia in 2014 after it annexed Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula, but has kept channels open for high-level meetings and for military-to-military cooperation. But the NATO-Russia Council, their preferred forum, has only met sporadically since then.

Agreeing on the agenda for NRC meetings has proven a challenge. NATO invited Russia to take part in one such meeting more than 18 months ago, but Stoltenberg said Moscow has declined to take up the offer.



NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg speaks during a media conference after a meeting of national security advisors at NATO headquarters in Brussels, Thursday, Oct. 7, 2021.

Associated Press

Russia quickly rejected NATO's assertion that it wants dialogue. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Thursday that "there is obviously a contradiction between NATO representatives' statements about their desire to normalize relations with our country and

their real actions."

"Those actions leave us with no illusions about the possibility of normalizing ties and resuming a dialogue with NATO. In fact, such prospects are practically fully undermined," Peskov said in a conference call with reporters. □

S. Korean court: Discharge of late transgender soldier unjust

By **KIM TONG-HYUNG**

Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) —

A South Korean court ruled Thursday that the military unlawfully discriminated against the country's first known transgender soldier by discharging her for undergoing gender reassignment surgery, in a landmark verdict that came seven months after she was found dead at her home.

Activist groups said the decision by the Daejeon District Court advances the rights of sexual minorities but also described it as delayed justice for Byun Hui-su, who had protested the army's decision to force her out.

South Korea prohibits transgender people from joining the military but has no specific laws on what to do with those who have sex reassignment operations during their time in service.

Byun, who had been a staff sergeant and tank driver, was discharged in January 2020 after the army concluded that her operation could be a reason for dismissal. The army then cited



In this Jan. 22, 2020 file photo, South Korean army Sergeant Byun Hui-su salutes during a press conference at the Center for Military Human Right Korea in Seoul, South Korea.

Associated Press

a law that allows the military to discharge personnel with physical or mental disability if those problems didn't result from combat or in the line of duty, and said Byun's loss of male genitals amounted to a disability.

Byun, who said she had sex reassignment surgery in Thailand in November 2019

after suffering depression over her sexual identity, expressed a desire to continue serving, but a military panel rejected her appeal. She filed a lawsuit against the military in August 2020, and her relatives inherited the suit after she was found dead at her home in the central city of Cheongju in March this year.

The Daejeon court said the army's decision to discharge Byun couldn't be legally justified because it was based on an assertion that she was male. The court pointed out that the army already knew Byun had applied to the Cheongju District Court to change her legal status as a woman before it decided to dis-

charge her. The Cheongju court granted Byun's request weeks after she was discharged.

"In deciding whether Byun Hui-su's case could be interpreted as a physical and mental disability as defined by the military personnel law, it's obvious that the decision should have been based on the premise that (Byun) was a woman following gender reassignment," the Daejeon court said in a statement explaining its ruling.

"Therefore, the (army's) conclusion that Byun Hui-su's loss of (her male genitals) amounted to physical and mental disability, which was based on the premise that Byun Hui-su was male even after gender reassignment surgery, is undoubtedly illegal and should be canceled," it said. Byun's plight struck a nerve in a deeply conservative country where transgender people and other sexual minorities often face harassment, abuse and discriminatory treatment, leaving many fighting depression. □

Africa welcomes new malaria vaccine as a 'game-changer'

By **CHINEDU ASADU**

Associated Press

LAGOS, Nigeria (AP) — African health officials are optimistic that the world's first malaria vaccine endorsed by the World Health Organization will "dramatically change" the way the continent of 1.3 billion people fights the disease.

The new malaria vaccine is "a game-changer" in combating the disease which accounts for hundreds of thousands of deaths each year in Africa, John Nken-gasong, director of the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, told an online press briefing Thursday.

The WHO endorsed the vaccine on Wednesday based largely on clinical trials carried out in three African countries — Ghana, Kenya and Malawi — where more than 800,000 children have received the vaccine

since 2019.

The news has been received with excitement in Africa — which accounted for 94% of the world's malaria cases in 2019 with an estimated 215 million cases, according to the WHO World Malaria Report 2020.



In this Wednesday, Dec. 11, 2019 file photo, residents of the Malawi village of Tomali wait to have their young children become test subjects for the world's first vaccine against malaria in a pilot program.

Associated Press

Malaria killed 386,000 people in the continent in 2019, more than 90% of the global toll, with six African countries accounting for more than half of the malaria deaths across the world, according to the WHO report. The Mosquirix malaria

vaccine, which GlaxoSmithKline has been working on since 1987, has limited efficacy of about 30% in preventing severe malaria and comes after decades of unsuccessful attempts to find protection against malaria. It offers some hope to children in African countries where there is limited access to bed nets and other preventive measures. The Africa CDC director also congratulated the three African countries that participated in the clinical trials for the malaria vaccine, which he said shows "African leadership and a can-do attitude to resolving and bringing solutions to some of our health problems."

The Kenya Medical Research Institute, which has helped to evaluate the vaccine, said in a statement it is "delighted" with the WHO's endorsement.

Bernhards Ogutu, chief research officer at the institute also said the vaccine has proven effective in children between the ages of 6 months and 2 years, and "where it has the greatest efficacy and greatest impact."

In Nigeria, the world's most affected country with 27% of the global malaria burden, officials said they hope Africa's most populous country will get priority when distribution of the vaccine begins.

"The Nigeria government and partners have to be proactive in providing the necessary guidelines, infrastructure and logistics ready so that when the vaccine becomes available, we are ready for full implementation," Perpetua Uhomobhi, national coordinator of the National Malaria Elimination Program, told AP. □

Wife of Haiti's slain president meets with judge amid probe

By P. LUXAMA

Associated Press

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (AP)

— Martine Moïse, the widow of Haiti's assassinated president, traveled to her homeland to answer questions behind closed doors on Wednesday from a judge overseeing the murder case.

Surrounded by heavy security, Moïse waved to supporters who yelled "Justice!" and entered the courthouse in the capital of Port-au-Prince, emerging almost three hours later. "I answered 80 questions," she said. "I gave him all the information I had."

The investigation into the July 7 attack in which President Jovenel Moïse was shot several times at his private home and his wife injured continues as many wonder who masterminded and financed the assassination. More than 40 suspects have been arrested including 20 Haitian police officers and 18 former Colombian soldiers, with Colombian officials saying the majority did not know the true nature of the operation. Authorities say other



Martine Moïse, the widow of slain President Jovenel Moïse, center, arrives to the courthouse to give testimony in the ongoing investigation into the assassination of her husband in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, Wednesday, Oct. 6, 2021.

Associated Press

suspects are still on the run, including a former Haitian senator. As Martine Moïse left the courthouse, a group of about 50 supporters surrounded her car and chanted, "This is my mom! This is my mom!"

Before departing, Moïse said she was seeking justice for her husband: "I'm calling on everyone who knows something about the assassination of my husband to bring some information to authorities."

She declined further comment except to say that it is the first time she speaks to the judge about the

case and that she would be available any time she is needed. Moïse was flown to Miami after being shot

and has been temporarily living there. Earlier in the day, supporters wearing white T-shirts emblazoned with a picture of Jovenel Moïse chanted and clapped as several yelled that the assassination was a blow for them. Some of them scuffled with critics of Moïse who also were present. Martine Moïse was interviewed the same day that the ombudsman-like Office of Citizen Protection held a press conference to demand that authorities investigate Haitian Prime Minister Ariel Henry. The former chief prosecutor of Port-au-Prince, whom Henry fired, said the prime minister had received two phone calls from a key suspect just hours after the assassination. □

Hong Kong police make largest smuggling bust worth \$26.9M

HONG KONG (AP) — Hong Kong authorities on Thursday said they have made their largest smuggling bust, seizing goods including endangered species worth an estimated \$26.9 million.

The government said the smuggling ring operated using speedboats and that four trucks were also impounded in the raid.

It said a 34-year-old man was arrested in the operation that began in June and more details were set to be released. A statement said the customs department and the marine police small boat division descended on the smugglers who were operating in the city's New Territories close to mainland China on Sept. 23.

"This is the largest smuggling case among all forms of smuggling by air, sea and land detected by Customs on record in terms of the seizure value," the government said.

Seized items displayed at a news conference included endangered plants, luxury handbags, cigars and shark's fin, which is prized as a delicacy in southern Chinese cuisine.

The semi-autonomous southern Chinese city has a high demand for luxury items along with abundant air and sea links to world markets. However, officials at the news conference said the smuggled items appeared intended for customers in mainland China. □



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Pering's Vice President for International Operation Alberto Perret Gentil: "With us you stay close to the ocean to live your dream"

ORANJESTAD — We interviewed Pering's Vice President for International Operation Alberto Perret Gentil from his apartment at Blue Residences. The Perret Group has been in real estate development in Aruba for quite some time now.

How do you see the real estate market in Aruba moving forward?

Pering is a 70 year old company founded by our father and a close friend back in 1950 and this is our 20th year anniversary in Aruba. We feel nowadays like Arubans and are very thankful to Aruba and its people for welcoming us when we had to move part of our business from our native Venezuela. Irwin my brother has been at the helm of the company for some 35 years and I have been responsible for the Aruba operation since I moved here with my family 14 years ago.

Going back to your question. Aruba is a two tier market; the tourist market

and the local market.

The tourist real estate market is booming because many people from the USA and Canada learned how to work from afar; from their dream destination via Zoom or Microsoft Teams. It has been the best year of our history sales wise. We expect prices on this segment to go up given the high demand and also the increase in construction prices of 15%-20% worldwide. Prices in the US already increased and Aruba's are still lagging. We are seeing also a new trend of people looking for villas and larger formats like 3BRs, 4BRs and Penthouses with one of the rooms turned into a home office now that they want to spend more time "workationing" from here.

Regarding the Aruban local market we expect more supply coming as some people unfortunately won't be able to pay their mortgaged loans given the economic hardships of the last year not allowing allow prices to increase.

But there is a moratorium by the Government on condominium developments.

Since December 2018. I personally think is not warranted. I have heard there are 1000 condos on the pipeline since we got here in 2001, but the reality is different. Look around how many have been built since or how many are currently under construction, 70?, 100 tops?. If you compare the number of vacation condominiums of for example Miami, Puerto Rico or Turks & Caycos vis a vis hotel/timeshare rooms Aruba has proportionately way less. And condominiums are great for the economy; its GDP, in general targeting high income individuals that spend on the island, pay its taxes in addition to the 6% transfer tax on purchase price they must paid to the Government and with very little if any pressure on more immigration.

Why did you choose to live in Blue If you are also the



developer of Oceania, Azure and Harbour House.

Each project has its own magic; Oceania has Eagle Beach, one of the very best in the world, Harbour House amazing city and ocean views and the downtown living experience and in Azure I like the lobby/restaurant and pool areas. Don't tell anyone but Blue is my favorite!! I like the expansive landscaped areas and the views toward Eagle Beach from my terrace. It has a more tranquil, private and a more easygoing ambiance. We just installed a new whirlpool, will soon commence works on the Prikichi Lounge at the lobby area and hopefully will finally get the permit for the beach bar across the street by the name of "Laama", an exclusive beach gathering space with tapas and drinks by Chef Urvin Croes from the Dejavu Group. Also worth mentioning In-fini, competing for the best restaurant in Aruba with Lima Bistro, soon to open at Harbour House. A new spa operator, state of the art fitness center, tennis and beach tennis facilities among others.

But lately we see many penthouses for sale?

That is correct and a great opportunity by the way. Our original owners were mostly wealthy Ven-

ezuelans. Many recently moved their permanent residence to Europe and the US and cannot enjoy their "weekend getaway". And currently Venezuelans have restrictions to enter Aruba and thus rather sell. I bought my PH in a resale recently.

Large format units are selling like hotcakes in Aruba, people that decided to work from their dream destination and with the best internet in the Caribbean. Workation is here to stay. I personally love the interior design of Blue Residences 3BRs or 5 BRs penthouses, its big balconies overlooking the ocean where we gather with friends and family almost weekly for BBQ or paella, its vaulted ceilings and double the ocean views as is it has two levels.

What keeps you busy these days?

Working on a new development opportunity we hope to announce shortly and staying busy with opening HarbourWalk, the ocean front retail area on Harbour House as well as re-launching the "Pa Amor di Nos Aruba" PANA Foundation, our social responsibility arm. Should find more time to spend with wife and kids though.

Any final tip for a person looking to buy a second home in Aruba?

Stay close to the ocean!! ☐

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Winners "Love your dog" drawing contest 2021



ORANJESTAD – In 2019, the first drawing contest for primary schools students about the Dog law was organized. This contest took place weeks after the National Plan, which addresses the stray dog problem, was announced. The theme for that year was the Dog law.

Last year a drawing and coloring contest was organized for kindergarten children till the third grade with a theme: "Your favorite pet". This is the third year that a drawing contest is organized for children through their drawings express and learn about the Dog law. Post Aruba N.V. will use the drawing of four

children as stamps for 2022. The deadline to submit the drawings was September 23, 2021. The action committee received more than a thousand participation forms. On September 29, the judges chose 24 winners; for each school grade and theme, they chose a winner. Given the talent

displayed by our children, the judges decided to nominate for each class a runner-up. Thirty children, each with one adult, received an invitation to receive their gift at the government building and take pictures with Prime Minister Evelyn Wever-Croes, Minister Ursell Arends, and Minister Endy Croes. □

Results Census2020 - Education

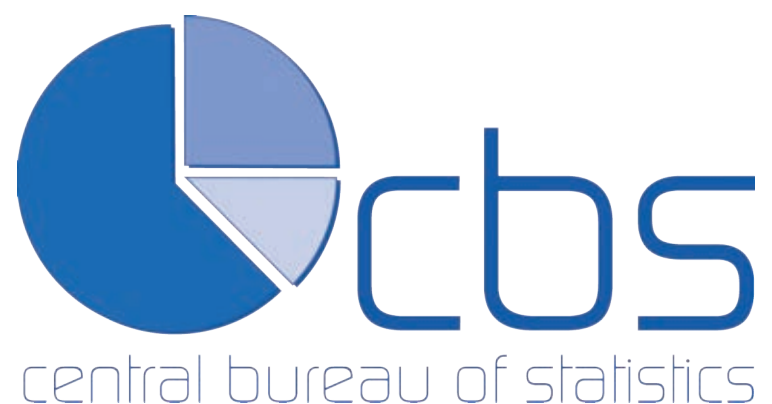
ORANJESTAD - The Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) presents the results of the Censo2020 for the topic, Education.

In Aruba, for several decades, the percentage of children and youth following education is very high. The results of the Censo2020 underscore this one more time.

The results indicate that 87.5% of children and youth in the age group 0 to 17 years are attending school or following an education,

including different types of online education. For children between 4 and 16 years for whom compulsory education is applicable, the percentage of participation is much higher, namely 98.7%. The participation percentage is almost the same for boys (98.6%) and girls (98.9%). The main reasons for not going to school were physical or mental health problems followed by the current COVID-19 pandemic. Compared to Censo2010, in 2020, the percentage of

children between 0-3 years that visited a day-care center decreased. While in 2010, 45.4% of children till 3 years old were visiting a day-care center, in 2020, the percentage stood at 35.9%. There was also a slight decrease for children attending school, aged 4 to 5 years from 97.9% in 2010 to 96.0% in 2020. In the age group, 6 to 11 years, the results of Censo2020 showed a slight increase in the percentage of children attending school, from 98.8% in 2010 to 99.3% in



2020. There was also an increase for young persons between 12 and 17 years. While in 2010, 96.0% of young persons were attending school, in 2020, this percentage increased to 98.1%. The percentage of

boys and girls attending school is almost the same, 87.3% for boys and 87.7% for girls between 0-17 years. □

For more information go to www.cbs.aw

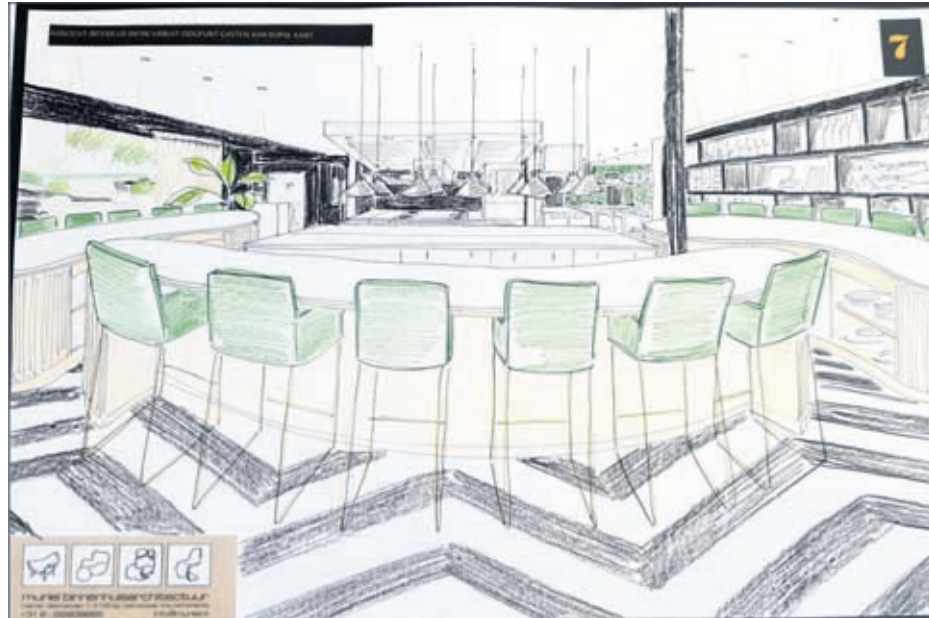
New beginnings after the kitchen table and beyond with new restaurant: Infini by Chef Urvin Croes

PALM BEACH — After spearheading The Kitchen Table for five years, receiving notable recognitions in USA Today, The Daily Meal and earning the #1 spot on Tripadvisor's list of Fine Dining Restaurants in the Caribbean, Chef Urvin Croes has now moved on to higher heights. Infini, his new chef's table, which opened at the Blue Residences in November 2020, allows the Michelin-trained Aruban culinary artist to create gastronomic experiences unconfined by cultural or regional expectations. The former The Kitchen Table space has since been renovated into a suitable culinary studio to host this vision. In describing these changes, Croes says: "We opened up the entire kitchen and elevated the dining tables so guests have a front row stadium-like view of each step of the preparations. The spotlights, which we carefully choreograph, follow the plates' transition from blank canvas into culinary works of art."

"It is a flavor that you cannot define, but you can create."

He had been sitting on the first menu for over a year. Inspired by umami, one of the five basic tastes, and also Japanese for "essence of deliciousness", Chef Croes strived to organically produce this palate in each dish of the eight-course Chef's Impression. "It is a flavor that you cannot define, but you can create. Take our popular langoustine for example; we combined elements that are rarely paired together: the bitter, sour and salty flavors of the lemon cream, kombucha, green grapes, watercress and achiote, fused with the sweet and delicate taste of the langoustine induce ultimate umami."

After hosting the first menu for three months, the Executive Chef introduced a second tour de force in February 2021 — this time a pes-



catarian menu dedicated to Lent, of which Croes has to say: "I wanted to focus on the finest fish in the world, they are the protagonists of this season." Visitors can experience the second Chef's Impression until May 2021, at which point Croes and his team will reveal exciting new flavors for the summer.

"Without a great team, there is no great chef"

"There is very little I can do by myself. Without a great team, there is no great chef", says Croes, while raving about the six young professionals sharing his kitchen. All graduates of Aruba's EPI College and familiar faces to the Chef as each one has completed their culinary internship under his guidance. In fact, Infini's Chef de Cuisine, Ashwin Maduro, was Urvin's very first student, before relocating to Amsterdam, where he worked at several Michelin-starred restaurants, including &moshik (formally &Samhoud Places). Having recently re-



turned to Aruba, Chef Maduro is thrilled to be reunited with his first mentor and hopes to secure Aruba's space on the global map of unique culinary experiences. Similarly, after four years working in the two-Michelin starred restaurant Spectrum, Chef de Partie Moises Ramirez returned home to share his vast experience in formulating recipes with meticulous attention to detail and consistency. Further down the kitchen line, Chef de Partie Alvaro Yi, who has worked at the two-Michelin starred FG Restaurant, is all about expressing himself through cooking and plating to create art that you can eat. Mixologist Marc-Anthony Rannis brings eight years of experience in the fine dining industry to Infini. His fine craftsmanship is displayed in the unparalleled wine pairings and signature cocktails, which include his personally homemade syrups, garnishes and fresh local ingredients. Maître D' and Junior Sommelier Jessica Theysen, who previously



managed renowned Chef Dennis Huwaë's Restaurant Daalder in Amsterdam, is a true storyteller. From the moment she serves the Salinity welcome drink and the culinary tale begins, she takes you on an adventure around the world to discover never-before-tasted combinations. Then, towards the end of the night, it is his time to shine — Pastry Chef Jean-Claude Werleman, that is. After spending the last two years perfecting his recipes in the Pastry Department of the Ritz Carlton Aruba, Werleman joins Infini to continue exploring his passion for experimenting with colors and bold flavors.

"It's time to show that Aruba is a culinary destination of its own"

"The goal is to leave our visitors speechless. The look on their faces whenever they take the first bite says it all and it is priceless", shares Croes, with a smile. Reclaiming the spot of number one restaurant in the Caribbean is also in sight, but this time he will not stop there. "In the end, we want Aruba to be recognized for its culinary mastery. We have trained the best culinary artists right here on the island and they have proven themselves internationally in the most renowned kitchens in the world. Now it is time to show that Aruba is a culinary destination of its own. Who knows where that will take us; hopefully to infinity and beyond."

Infini located at Blue Residences currently serves an eight-course Chef's Impression to up to 21 guests starting at 6:30PM. To make reservations visit www.infiniaruba.com or call +297-699-3982. □



infini
by Urvin Croes



Puzzle overhanging job market: When will more people return?

By **CHRISTOPHER RUGABER**
AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP)—When the U.S. government issues the September jobs report on Friday, the spotlight will fall not only on how many people were hired last month. A second question will command attention, too: Are more people finally starting to look for work? To an extent that has surprised economists, many people who lost or quit their jobs during the pandemic recession have yet to look for work again despite a robust economic rebound that has left many employers desperate to hire.

Across the country, widespread and persistent labor shortages have hampered industries from restaurants and hotels to manufacturing and construction. Expectations that more applicants would flow into the job market in September as schools reopened and federal unemployment benefits ended have dimmed. A key reason is that coronavirus cases stemming from the delta variant remain high, although the pace of confirmed infections has slowed in recent weeks. Speaking at a news conference last month, Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell acknowledged that a surge of job seekers didn't likely occur last month, largely because of a renewed fear of infection. "It didn't happen with any force in September, and a lot of that was delta," Powell said.

Many economists still think that most of the roughly 3 million people who lost jobs and stopped looking for work since the pandemic struck will resume their searches as COVID wanes. It took years after the 2008-2009 recession, they note, for the proportion of people working or seeking work to return to pre-recession levels. The government doesn't count people as unemployed unless they're actively looking for jobs. Still, there are signs that some of the factors that have kept many jobless people on the sidelines may be starting to ease.

If so, a larger pool of job seekers might have helped boost hiring in September — or, if not, could do so in the coming months.



A staff at the California Department Fish & Wildlife examines a contaminated Sanderling from the oil spill in Huntington Beach, Calif., Monday, Oct. 4, 2021.

Associated Press

According to a survey by the Census Bureau, for example, the number of people who aren't working because they must stay home to care for a child declined by half in September compared with June. That figure had barely dropped last fall, when many schools remained closed and conducted virtual learning. The new census figures suggest that more parents, particularly mothers, might have rejoined the workforce last month as the school year began and their children returned to school.

In addition, an August survey by the job listings website Indeed found that the proportion of unemployed Americans who said they'd like to find a job once the school year began had more than doubled from just two months earlier. Yet there are also signs that it might be too soon to expect a flood of parents to have rejoined the labor market. Lael Brainard, a member of the Fed's Board of Governors, noted in a recent speech that COVID-19 outbreaks in late

September caused 2,000 schools to close for an average of six days in 39 states. "The possibility of further unpredictable disruptions,"

Brainard said, "could cause some parents to delay their plans to return to the labor force."

Several enhanced unemployment benefits ended in early September, including a \$300-a-week federal supplement as well as programs that, for the first time, covered gig workers and people who were jobless for six months or more. So far, the ending of those programs appears to have had only a small effect on the number of people seeking work.

Governors in about 25 states ended the \$300 benefit before the nationwide expiration in September. Research by economists at Goldman Sachs found that unemployed people who were looking for work were much more likely to take jobs when their benefits ended. But the early cut-offs did not cause people on the sidelines to start searching again, Goldman concluded.

Scott Sureddin, chief executive of DHL Supply Chain North America, said he believes that the ending of

supplemental unemployment aid has boosted the number of applications his company is receiving, even though the number

of job-seekers remains below pre-pandemic levels. The company plans to hire about 12,000 temporary employees for the holiday season. So far, it has filled about half those jobs.

The company has raised pay for warehouse workers from \$15 an hour, before COVID struck, to roughly \$18 to \$20, Sureddin said. The company also centralized its hiring so it could bring people on board faster — before another employer could hire them. Still, finding enough drivers remains a challenge, Sureddin said, just as it was before COVID. Many people are reluctant to drive long routes away from their families for an extended period. The company is offering more flexible schedules at its warehouses, in part to accommodate parents.

"A lot of people are changing careers based on where they want to work, and whether they can spend more time with their family," he added.

Another reason workers are scarce is a surge in retire-

ments among older, more affluent workers whose home equity and stock portfolios have surged since the pandemic struck and who have managed to build up savings. Goldman Sachs estimates that about 1.5 million people have retired who wouldn't have before the pandemic upended the economy. Many of these people will likely stay retired, economists expect.

In the meantime, fear of COVID continues to keep some would-be job seekers on the sidelines, notably those who previously worked in public-facing service jobs at restaurants, bars, hotels and retailers.

"Folks are just hesitant to take hourly jobs with a high likelihood of interacting with the public," said Dave Gilbertson, vice president of UKG, a software company that tracks the shifts worked at its 35,000 client companies. Its data has closely matched the government's jobs numbers this year.

Gilbertson said that UKG's data points to modestly better hiring in September compared with August. He said the delta variant, which sharply slowed hiring in August, reduced the number of shifts worked last month in the Southeast, where COVID cases soared in late summer.

Brainard noted that the number of people not working because they had COVID or were caring for someone with the disease doubled between July and early September, according to Census data.

Economists have forecast that employers added 488,000 jobs in September — about half the gains in both June and July but well above August's sluggish 235,000 job growth. They expect the unemployment rate to drop from 5.2% to 5.1%.

"It may just be that it's going to take more time," Powell said at his news conference last month, "but it still seems that inexorably, people will ... get back to work when it's time to do that." □

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

- ACROSS**
- 38 Barn
 - 1 Fixed section
 - a chair 40 Tolerate
 - seat 42 Runway
 - 6 Calendar worker
 - page 43 TV's
 - 11 Give an Leary
 - address 44 Winter
 - 12 Chicago gliders
 - airport 45 Periphery

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Yesterday's answer

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- 7 Cry of surprise
 - 8 Midsection ring, e.g.
 - 9 Claire of "Key Largo"
 - 10 Because of this
 - 17 Revolts
 - 23 Whole bunch
 - 24 Kinsey topic
 - 26 Tart cooler
 - 27 Twitch-es
 - 28 Starter's need
 - 30 Band helper
 - 31 Accent
 - 33 Corridors
 - 39 Went ahead
 - 41 Garden section

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10-8

A X Y D L B A A X R
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

10-8

CRYPTOQUOTE

V K I I M T X J M V K C S K J F C N Q C
Z E D K I N X V C Q H M N Z C Q H D N
B C J B F C L J M ' V " X V N M L I J Q
C F C D V H J M " ; V K C P " Q E M I J Q
J I I H D C . " — A C X X H D N Z H V I J Q I

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: WITH THE EXCEPTION OF WORLD UNREST, NOTHING BREAKS OUT IN MORE PLACES THAN AN OLD GARDEN HOSE. — WEARY GARDENER



A staff at the California Department Fish & Wildlife examines a contaminated Sanderling from the oil spill in Huntington Beach, Calif., Monday, Oct. 4, 2021.

Associated Press

Birds, wetlands may bear early brunt of California spill

By AMY TAXIN

Associated Press

HUNTINGTON BEACH, Calif. (AP) — Since a pipeline spilled crude off the California coast this weekend, only a handful of oiled birds have been recovered in what environmental advocates said could be a hopeful sign for the region's wildlife.

But they said it's too soon to know how many seabirds, marine mammals and other animals will ultimately be affected by the oily film covering marsh areas and floating on the ocean or for how long.

Oiled seabirds are often among the earliest victims of a spill because gobs of crude washing up onto the sand and wetlands can clump their feathers together, leaving them chilled by the cold ocean water. Sea mammals and fish that ingest oil can also be affected later on, while damage to coastal wetlands where fish go to spawn can erode critical habitat for scores of species, environmental experts said.

"Those wetlands are nurseries for hundreds of species and they also reduce erosion and storm surge," said Peter Kareiva, president and chief executive of the Aquarium of the Pacific in Long Beach. "To lose wetlands, the coastal vegetation, is not good for the people who live along the coast and it's also not good for the fish along the coast." Oil has been washing up on Southern California beaches and wetlands since a suspected leak in an underwater pipeline sent 126,000 gallons (572,807 liters) of heavy crude into the ocean waters. The spill fouled the sands of famed Huntington Beach, known as Surf City USA, and could keep some beaches closed for weeks or longer. It also prompted state officials to shut down fishing on a long stretch of the Orange County coast.

At nearby Talbert Marsh in Huntington

Beach, a fish jumped and splashed in oily water while two pelicans moved across the surface nearby. The wetland area right off the beach has been blocked off to the public and barriers laid across the surface of the water to try to prevent the foul-smelling crude from spreading.

Michael Ziccardi, director of the Oiled Wildlife Care Network, said four oiled birds have been recovered since the spill, one that had to be euthanized. The group has fielded about 20 calls from residents reporting oiled animals and dispatches teams to assess and, if necessary, capture and treat the birds, he said.

Ziccardi said the relatively few reports of oil-laden wildlife leave him "cautiously optimistic" about the extent of the spill's impact. "It's much better than we had feared," he told reporters on Monday.

But in other offshore oil spills the largest number of oiled birds have been collected two to five days out from the incident, Ziccardi said, so it's too soon to know how big the impact will be. Teams are out searching for affected animals in the spill area and beyond, he said, adding that birds that are oiled but can still fly should be captured by trained experts so they can be treated and released.

Marine mammals can also be affected by a spill but more often the issues they face are long-term due to ingestion or inhalation of oil, he said. Harbor seals and sea lions, for example, don't rely on their fur to stay warm and so they don't typically suffer as many external effects from a spill as birds, he said.

The impact on these animals will take much longer to understand, he said, adding that researchers are just starting to learn about some of these long-term effects from the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill. □

Google says flight search tool can help you fly 'greener'

By MATT OTT

AP Business Writer

SILVER SPRING, Md. (AP)

— Searching for flights on Google just got "greener." A new search feature rolled out Wednesday tells users which flights have lower carbon emissions, giving them the ability to choose flights based on carbon emissions just as they would price or the number of layovers.

A basic search for flights will give an estimate of how many kilograms of carbon dioxide the flight will spew from start to finish. Users can prioritize their search by emissions, much like they can by price, if desired. Flights with emissions below the median get highlighted in green. Google said the estimates are a combination of data from the European Environmental Agency and flight-specific information it gets from airlines and other providers. That data could include an aircraft's age, model and configuration, the speed and altitude it flies at and the distance between the flight's origin and destination.

Some flights may not have estimates because of a lack of data on certain aircraft or other missing information, Google said. The company added that the estimates don't yet take into account what direction the plane is heading — a potentially significant factor if flying into or with the jet stream, or whether or not the flight is using bio-fuels or other alternatives. Using the new tool, the least polluting flights from the Washington, D.C., area to Chicago are all United flights using Boeing 737s. The 128 kilograms of carbon dioxide falls 21% below the median. An American Airlines flight on another Boeing 737 from San



In this Nov. 18, 2019 file photo, the logo of Google is displayed on a carpet at the entrance hall of Google France in Paris.

Associated Press

Francisco to New York with a stop in Dallas emits 535 kilograms of carbon dioxide, 9% less than the median for that route. Multiple stops can often result in an increase in emissions, but it's not always the case. Non-stop flights aren't always less polluting, particularly on longer routes. Google says that a more fuel-efficient plane can emit less on a multiple-stop journey than an older plane on a non-stop route. Airplanes account for a small portion of emissions that cause climate change about 2% to 3% but their share has been growing rapidly and is expected to roughly triple by mid-century with the global growth in travel.

The airline trade group Airlines for America says U.S. carriers have more than doubled the fuel efficiency of their fleets since 1978

and plan further reductions in carbon emissions. But the independent International Council on Clean Transportation says passenger traffic is growing nearly four times faster than fuel efficiency, leading to a 33% increase in emissions between 2013 and 2019. The new emissions tool follows Google's introduction last month of a way for people to find "eco-certified" hotels. Also on Wednesday, Google introduced technology that allows drivers to find more fuel-efficient routes on Google Maps and from Google's Nest thermostat, upgrades that will help people find energy from the power grid during times of day when its sources are cleaner, such as from wind and solar.

The new features are part of a sustainability initiative Google CEO Sundar Pichai

highlighted Wednesday.

"Climate change is no longer a distant threat — it's increasingly local and personal," Pichai wrote in a blog post. "We need urgent and meaningful solutions to address this pressing challenge," he added, saying the company has committed to run its data centers and campuses on carbon-free energy by 2030. □



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In 'Lamb,' a haunting Icelandic film about motherhood

By **LINDSEY BAHR**
AP Film Writer

Noomi Rapace flew into Iceland to film "Lamb" on a Sunday and on Monday morning, she was literally delivering baby lambs on camera. There wasn't time to wait or practice. It was the last week of lambing season and the crew had already told the mother sheep that they could not give birth until Rapace arrived. They were at least half-joking.

Although Rapace has been put to the test in films like "Prometheus" and "The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo," delivering baby animals was a new one.

"I had this adrenaline rush right before I stepped in and I could just feel my heart racing," Rapace said. "And then as soon as I was in the situation, it just felt so natural. It felt like I know how to do this weirdly enough. You don't have time to think or to be nervous. You just got to do it, you know?"

In some ways, it was an appropriately intense and bizarre start for what is certainly an intense and bizarre film in which a childless couple, María (Rapace) and Ingvar (Hilmir Snær Guðnason), discover a half lamb, half human baby in their barn and decide to raise her as their own. It's almost a no-brainer that A24, the studio and distributor that has put out



This image released by A24 shows Noomi Rapace in a scene from the film "Lamb."

Associated Press

films like "Midsommar" and "The Lobster," would jump at the chance to bring this strange Icelandic tale to a wide audience (it opens Friday in North American theaters).

"Lamb" is the feature debut of Valdimar Jóhannsson, who has spent much of his career working various crew jobs for Hollywood productions that make a stop in Iceland. "Prometheus" was actually one such gig (he laughed that he worked in the "smoke and fog department") but he didn't cross paths with Rapace there. Still, he knew she'd be perfect for María, who wants a child of her own. Plus, she already spoke Icelandic, having

lived there for a bit as a kid. Jóhannsson can't quite remember how the idea came to him, but he started collecting haunting images and put together a scrapbook that he delivered to Rapace along with a script he co-wrote with Sjórn, an Icelandic poet and novelist.

"It's a family drama with just one element that is off," said Rapace, laughing. "It's such a beautiful story about motherhood. She's like trapped in this limbo reality of grief in the beginning, and then she's given this opportunity to heal. María's journey was so inspiring and original and strange at the same time. I love the simplicity of

the story."

The shoot was not quite as simple. To create the child, Ada, production used 10 children of various ages and four lambs and edited them together. There was very little CGI, Jóhannsson said. It's perhaps why the image is so disarming and effective.

On top of that, the set was in a very isolated region of Iceland, where sheep already outnumber humans two to one, with no phone signal and where the sunlight shines for nearly 20 hours a day.

"I feel like I left the world and I was living within this reality for three months. María very much took over me and my body and my

dreams," Rapace said. "But it helps you... And it really reflected the way a lot of people live in Iceland. My grandmother, family members of mine, they do live on those remote farms."

Rapace loves too that the film taps into something primal and mythological.

"When I was pregnant with my son I dreamt that I gave birth to like weird creatures. My worst nightmare would be to give birth to something that is half human. I've done it in 'Prometheus' and here I'm the mother of something that's in between," she said. "For me, films are freedom and there's no rules and we can explore and investigate from a place of total freedom. There's no bad. There's no good. It's just like 'what are we? What is the human species and what else is there?'"

Jóhannsson didn't make the film thinking it would get a big international release, but he's excited that it is. And he said he was actually more nervous for the premiere in Iceland than at the Cannes Film Festival.

"The Icelandic people, you know if you shoot something in the North and then cut it with something in the South, they'll be like 'it's not how it is! I don't recognize that!'" he said.

But it turns out he didn't have anything to fear: Icelandic sheep farmers liked it too. □



The Fisk Jubilee Singers perform at the Americana Honors & Awards show Wednesday, Sept. 22, 2021, in Nashville, Tenn.

Associated Press

By **KRISTIN M. HALL**
AP Entertainment Writer
Nashville, Tenn. (AP) — The Fisk Jubilee Singers' first

tour wasn't an immediate success, but their perseverance through financial hardship to find an audi-

Fisk Jubilee Singers celebrate 150 years since first tour

ence took them around the world and kept their school afloat. Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee, celebrated the singing group's 150th anniversary on Wednesday and reflected on a legacy that was built with their performances of slave spirituals, which kept alive not only the university but also a musical tradition. Poet, author and educator Nikki Giovanni, who is a Fisk alumna, talked about that first tour during her keynote speech during Jubilee Day, their annual event.

"We're here today celebrating," Giovanni said. "But when we look at how we carried those songs, and we carry those songs now, and we still lean on the everlasting arms."

Opened as a liberal arts school for freed Black slaves in 1866, Fisk University was financially struggling just a few years later. Giovanni explained that one of the students, Ella Sheppard, who was born a slave, offered to help. She was a piano player.

Nine students, some of

those former slaves or descendants of slaves, set off on a tour on Oct. 6, 1871, singing mostly European songs, such as those by Gilbert and Sullivan, to white audiences, Giovanni said. They got little response and barely made enough money to feed themselves, but still managed to donate money to victims of the deadly Chicago fire of 1871. The turning point was when they started singing the songs their ancestors had brought with them to America: spirituals. □

No more excuses: Deontay Wilder rejuvenated for Fury finale

By **GREG BEACHAM**
AP Sports Writer

World champion boxers have reacted to their first career losses in all sorts of dramatic ways while they scramble to cope after their mental armor of invincibility is punctured. Some fire their longtime trainers. Others make unbelievable, outlandish excuses. Nearly all insist the defeat was an unfair, undeserved setback that will be set right immediately. Deontay Wilder did all three in the days, weeks and months after Tyson Fury badly beat him in February 2020. The former WBC heavyweight champion clearly struggled to process his first loss since the 2008 Beijing Olympics, and he responded by upending his career and his reputation in a quest to make it better. Wilder (42-1-1, 41 KOs) also exercised the rematch clause in his contract, forcing Fury back into the Las Vegas ring with him Saturday night for the long-delayed completion of an already memorable trilogy. "You're looking at a rejuvenated and reinvented Deontay Wilder," he said recently. "The old Deontay is no longer there. I can't explain it to you, I have to show you." The man who helped transform Wilder from an aspiring basketball player to a late-blooming boxer and



Deontay Wilder, left, speaks to his trainer, Malik Scott, during a news conference in advance of his heavyweight title boxing bout against Tyson Fury, in Las Vegas on Wednesday, Oct. 6, 2021.
Associated Press

an eventual heavyweight champ is no longer there, either: Wilder fired trainer Mark Breland, who threw in the towel when his fighter was getting shellacked by Fury. Wilder blamed his performance on a litany of fantastical factors — Breland spiking his water bottle with a muscle relaxant, Fury using illegal gloves, and even leg fatigue from supporting the elaborate costume he wore on his ring walk. He also accused referee Kenny Bayless, a teetotaler, of being drunk. It all seemed ridiculous to everyone except Wilder

and his most devoted fans, but coping with losses is a difficult part of any boxer's job. What's more important is whether Wilder figured out a way to improve from the fighter who seemed tactically outmatched and physically incapable of overcoming it for most rounds of his first two fights with Fury (30-0-1, 21 KOs), the confident British champion. "I've dedicated myself and devoted my time and my body, me and my team, to reinventing myself," Wilder said Wednesday. "I'm ready to reintroduce myself to the world. ... This fight is

about redemption, retaliation and retribution." Wilder replaced Breland with Malik Scott, a former heavyweight who got knocked out by Wilder in 2014. Scott has rededicated Wilder to fundamentals of movement and punching, with the belief Wilder can overcome Fury's technical precision with a practical application of his fighter's physical strengths. But every fight for Wilder is in the head, and it's still unclear what kind of shape he's in mentally after his wild excuse-making binge in 2020. On Wednesday, Wilder said he still believes

everything he claimed about the loss, and he called Breland "a disloyal trainer." "My energy is like my mind," Wilder said. "It's very violent." After Wilder's rematch clause and an arbitrator's ruling forced Fury to drop out of a planned summer matchup with fellow British champion Anthony Joshua, the trilogy bout was delayed from July to October by a COVID-19 outbreak in Fury's camp. Those three months of training could prove important for Wilder, who has taken a more mature perspective on the loss in recent interviews. "I needed everything that happened in that (second) fight," Wilder said. "It was really a blessing in disguise." Although he is coming off months of dedicated training, Wilder is still a wild card — which fits this matchup just fine, since Fury isn't exactly a conventional human being himself. While promoting the fight earlier this summer, Wilder basically refused to speak at his own news conference — and then engaged in a six-minute staredown with Fury during the ceremonial faceoff. And in their final news conference Wednesday, promoters wouldn't allow Wilder and Fury to face off for fear of a brawl breaking out. □

Kane, Matthews and Jones first 3 picks for U.S. Olympic team

By **STEPHEN WHYNO**
AP Hockey Writer

Chicago winger Patrick Kane and defenseman Seth Jones and Toronto center Auston Matthews were the first three players named to the U.S. Olympic men's hockey team on Thursday. "It's no secret we're excited about the prospects of our team for the 2022 Games," said USA Hockey general manager Stan Bowman, who also runs the Blackhawks. "Patrick, Auston and Seth reflect the high level of talent that will make up our final roster

as we strive to bring gold back home to the U.S." The U.S. has not won Olympic gold since 1980. NHL players began participating in the Olympics in 1998 and went five times before the league skipped the South Korea Games in 2018. The league, Players' Association and International Ice Hockey Federation asked each country to pick three players before the start of the NHL season. Each country's list of 55 players is due in mid-October with final rosters — 3 goalies and 22 skaters — unveiled in

January. Canada, which won gold in 2010 and 2014, announced Edmonton's reigning NHL MVP Connor McDavid, Pittsburgh captain Sidney Crosby and Vegas defenseman Alex Pietrangolo as its first three players. "We've got it pretty well nailed down," Canada GM Doug Armstrong told The Associated Press by phone this week. "There's a couple of tweaks that we're going to have to make here before it has to go in, but I would say we're one of the countries that you wish it didn't



Toronto Maple Leafs forward Auston Matthews (34) works on his conditioning and skating efficiency alone on the ice during their NHL training camp in Toronto on Friday, Sept. 24, 2021.
Associated Press

exist because your remaining guys are going to have a great October, November, December, but so be it. That's just the way it

has to be. Just because of the depth of the Canadian hockey program, you want to try and make that list as accurate as possible." □

Ko has early lead at Founders Cup, 11 straight rounds in 60s

WEST CALDWELL, N.J. (AP)

— Jin Young Ko put a tough loss behind her quickly and ran off six birdies over a seven-hole stretch on the back nine for an 8-under 63 on Thursday to build an early three-shot lead in the Cognizant Founders Cup. It was her 11th consecutive round in the 60s, three short of the record that Annika Sorenstam set in 2005.

Sandra Gal had a 66 despite not making birdie on any of the par 5s at Mountain Ridge.

The large group at 67 included Nelly Korda, the No. 1 player in women's golf who had not played since the Solheim Cup a month ago, U.S. Women's Open champion Yuka Saso and two-time major champion So Yeon Ryu.

Ko, whom Korda replaced at No. 1 in the summer, had control of the ShopRite LPGA Classic last week in southern New Jersey until she missed a series of putts from the 10-foot range, including the last hole to finish one shot behind Celine Boutier.

She went shopping in Manhattan, took her share of naps and watched streaming shows. And then she was back to work, and it was working well.



Jin Young Ko, of South Korea, right, smiles after finishing the first round of the Cognizant Founders Cup LPGA golf tournament, Thursday, Oct. 7, 2021, in West Caldwell, N.J.

Associated Press

Ko began the back nine of the Donald Ross design with three straight birdies. Following a par on the par-3 13th, she ran off three straight birdies again.

"I was a little sad on the Sunday last week," Ko said. "I had a lot of putts on back nine, so I was thinking, 'Still my putter is really good, so like don't be negative.' So I will give myself positive thinking, and today I had a great round. The putting was not bad."

Boutier and Inbee Park, who also finished one behind last week, played in the afternoon.

Korda had not competed in stroke play since Aug. 22, the final round of the Women's British Open at Carnoustie. The Olympic gold medalist took a month off to relax and contemplate what she has done this year — first major among three wins, an Olympic gold and her rise to No. 1 in the world. The 23-year-old American

hopes this is only the start.

"I just go about my business the same as I would be ranked 20th, top 10, No. 1. I'm still trying to achieve goals," Korda said. "There are girls still hunting for me. There is still a lot I would like to accomplish in my career. I'm hoping to put my foot on the pedal still."

One of those hunting her is Ko, who held the No. 1 ranking for two years until Korda surpassed her by winning the KPMG Women's PGA

at Atlanta Athletic Club.

Ko is trying to worry more about the next shot instead of the No. 1 ranking. She has been on a roll since falling to No. 2. In six starts since the Women's PGA, the 26-year-old South Korean has won twice, been runner-up and had two other finishes in the top 10. At the moment, she is chasing players past and present.

"Nelly is good player and I'm always happy to compete with her," Ko said. "I want to play better than her a little bit, but she still hits it farther and great putter. I have to focus more on my game when I'm playing with Nelly."

Sorenstam set the LPGA record for consecutive rounds in the 60s during her 10-win season in 2005. The streak ended with a 73 on the final day of the LPGA Championship, which she won by three shots at Bulle Rock.

Ko's run began with a 69 in the final round of the Evian Championship. The next three tournaments were all 54 holes, one shortened by rain.

"If I can, it's going to be a great honor," Ko said of the Sorenstam record. "If not, still fine." □



Los Angeles Angels' Shohei Ohtani watches the path of his solo home run against the Seattle Mariners in the first inning of a baseball game Sunday, Oct. 3, 2021, in Seattle.

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Two-way phenom Shohei Ohtani of the Los Angeles Angels was selected major league player of the year by Baseball Digest and eBay.

Max Scherzer was voted pitcher of the year and

Josh Hader was picked as the top reliever in awards announced Thursday. Ohtani received 16 first-place votes in balloting by a 19-member panel of baseball writers and broadcasters that included several former players,

Ohtani wins Baseball Digest player of year; Scherzer top arm

managers and executives. At the plate, Ohtani hit 46 home runs — third-most in the majors — and had 100 RBIs while compiling a .965 OPS that ranked fifth. He scored 103 runs, stole 25 bases and even tied for the big league lead with eight triples.

He became the only player in history with at least 45 homers, 25 doubles, 25 steals and eight triples in one season.

On the mound, the right-hander from Japan went 9-2 with a 3.18 ERA in 23 starts. He struck out 156 batters and walked 44 in 130 1/3 innings.

It was a two-way performance unmatched in

baseball annals, even by Babe Ruth.

Toronto Blue Jays slugger Vladimir Guerrero Jr. got two first-place votes and came in second, 14 points behind Ohtani. Washington Nationals outfielder Juan Soto was third and Kansas City Royals catcher Salvador Perez, who received the other first-place vote, finished fourth. Scherzer, traded from Washington to the Los Angeles Dodgers on July 30, went 15-4 with a 2.46 ERA and 236 strikeouts in 179 1/3 innings. He was 7-0 with a 1.98 ERA in 11 starts for the Dodgers.

The three-time Cy Young Award winner received

eight first-place votes and beat out Milwaukee Brewers ace Corbin Burnes, who led the majors with a 2.43 ERA and was picked first on four ballots.

Scherzer also won Baseball Digest pitcher of the year in 2013 with the Detroit Tigers.

Hader was a runaway winner with 16 first-place votes after converting 34 of 35 save chances for NL Central champion Milwaukee this season. He went 4-2 with a 1.23 ERA and 102 strikeouts in 60 appearances covering 58 2/3 innings. The left-hander didn't give up a run in his final 21 outings. □